1: Hoebel E-5 (1933) 1940 NO6 Comanche NO6

been done away with from intercourse with the more civilized Indians. . . ."[4] 428
Further, even the tipi in which the dead person, man or woman, lived was 768
totally destroyed; also for a child, but not for a baby. Articles of intimate personal usage were buried with the corpse. Other less important articles were burned. Possessions with medicine powers were either destroyed by throwing them into the river, or by placing them in an unfrequented tree where they could rot.

Claimants for any surplus property were the relatives, close friends 428
of the deceased and fellow tribesmen who came to mourn—especially those who mourned with enthusiasm. Superficially there seems to be no consistency in the Comanche rules of disposal—as to whether goods went to wife, to children, to brothers, or were given to non-relatives. The key is in the recognition of a plurality of levels of legal and customary claims.

First, the surplus property by "law" (presumably law, but its reliability could not be tested to determine enforcement) went to the widow, upon whom the obligation to share with others was imposed. Thus Itoβits said that a wife would "probably" inherit the property, and if her mother-in-law still lived, she might divide with her. Where the marriage had been polygamous, Gets To Be A Middle-Aged Man stated, "Only those wives who had had children by the deceased husband may inherit from him; the first wife administers the distribution." That's It offered that a wife could not keep all the property for herself. "If she tried to, her husband's friends would make trouble."

The first outside claim could be that of the deceased husbands' best friend. He was privileged to ask for the favorite horse: refusal reputedly never occurred. But this was not a cut-in on the widow's property, because if the horse was not given to the intimate friend as a keep-sake, it was invariably slaughtered at the grave. In no event did it enure to the widow. By pre-death testament a man occasionally expressed the desire that his [763] ● horse be given to a specified friend, rather than be slaughtered.

Outsiders who had no personal claim to a share in the estate could estab- 428
lish an obligatory claim in two ways. By providing a suit of clothes or add- 626
ing property of their own to the goods buried with the person, they imposed upon the survivors an obligation to share the estate. Visitors mourned and mourned until they were given sufficient gifts to stop them. This was an irresistible pressure from without.

Within the group of heirs, after the wife, surplus horses went to the 428
"father, mother, brothers, and all other relatives according to the degree of

[4] Schoolcraft, *The Indian Tribes, etc.*, vol. 2, p. 133.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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When the sun was shining you were mighty nice. When the sun went down you were devils. Don't you remember how you were? Boys will be boys.' "[26]

They all laughed and let the matter drop. After all they were old men—peaceable, and not warriors jealous of their dignity.

Although they were a strong physical race of people, the Comanches were troubled with a number of diseases. Many of their ailments were due to their unbalanced diet, to exposure, and to the vigorous life they led. Among their more serious ailments were pneumonia, colds, rheumatism, wounds, broken bones, intestinal diseases, rattlesnake bites, smallpox, and cholera. The number with weak eyes, partially or completely blind, was appalling. Fevers often resulted from their trips to the east and south. The white intruders brought cholera, smallpox, and syphilis, which swept away many of the people. Epidemics of smallpox took heavy tolls in 1816, in 1839–40, and in the winter of 1861–62. The cholera epidemic of 1849, brought from the East by immigrants on the road to California, possibly resulted in more fatalities than the smallpox plague. In any event, whether from violence, disease, or old age, the end came inevitably to every Comanche as to every man—and the cycle was closed.

When the condition of an elderly person became hopeless, he was usually "thrown away" by all except his most faithful relatives and friends; and sometimes even they would desert him. This was not due so much to lack of affection and sympathy as from fear of the evil spirits and his ghost, which were believed to have taken possession of his body. When he felt death drawing near, he made disposition of all his property and retired to a quiet spot to die. After making medicine in preparation, an old man might take his own life, and at least one case is known where a man took the life of his wife by cutting her throat because she was hopelessly ill and lonely.

There was not a long delay between death and burial. If possible, burial took place the same day. The body was prepared with great care by anyone who would undertake the job, usually near relatives assisted by a comrade or close friend of the deceased. A woman attended to the body of a woman; a man attended to a man's. When a small child died, it was buried still lashed to its cradle-board. Before

[26] Informant: That's It.

3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

were expected to receive special consideration on arriving in the eternal home beyond the sun. Mortal wounds or mortal illness vanished at death, leaving the victim free of their effects in the after world. But the spirit of the bad, the lazy, the coward, or the thief would be driven before the Great Spirit into a region that was barren, cold, and desolate, with rugged and sterile mountains infested with noxious animals and insects. There game was scarce, meager, and unsavory, and the soul had to wander through thorns and among rocks, thirsty, hungry, and in pain.

Our own Comanche informants revealed no such notions at all. Nor do the Shoshones have any such conception of post-mortem immanent justice. We suspect these assertions should be taken with a grain of salt, if not rejected.

Believed limitations of immortality included loss of scalp, strangulation, death in the dark, and mutilation. If the scalp were taken after death, the Comanches looked on life as annihilated. A scalp removed before death, whether by accident or design, affected immortality not in the least. To preserve the scalp on the head of a dead comrade was of more consequence than the preservation of one's own life; while by the same token, scalping a foe was of much greater merit than simply sending his spirit out of this world into the next, whence it would eventually return to plague the Comanches anew. "Dot" Babb says the Comanches did not scalp a Negro since they believed he had no soul, but they might kill him to prevent his killing Comanches. But the dance leader's scepter, given to Ralph Linton in 1933, had several scalp symbols on it—tokens of scalps taken by its original owner—and a couple of them (colored differently) were pointed out to represent Negro scalps.

Fear of strangulation arose from the belief that life (spirit or "soul thing") issued from the mouth at the moment of death. Thus if death occurred through choking, the passageway was closed and the spirit, unable to free itself, remained in the mortal body and was forever imprisoned in the ground at burial. Next to fear of strangulation came the fear of death in the dark, for the spirit that left the body in the dark might be unable to find its way to the after world and thus wander forever in darkness. Although the majority believed that mortal wounds or mortal illness vanished at death, there were some who

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
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115 159 584 Well, my brother was chumming around with this young boy. He was about nineteen and he went to Fort Sill School. And my brother, he go down there and come home with him sometimes. Finally, that summer when school was out, he brought that young man home with him and he stayed with us all summer. My mother said, "You better get married to this boy. He's a nice boy. He always helping with everything, and he might work for us if you get married to him." I didn't have no sense enough to . . . I mean I don't think about love, or anything like that. So I said, "If he wants to marry me, I marry him." So my mother said, "Do you want to marry my daughter?" and he said, "Yeah, I'll marry her." And that's the way I got married. They just give their kids away like that. If you ask anybody, "Do you want to marry my daughter?" They say, "Yeah." That's your husband . . . just like that.

115 159 115 159 154 743 543 Sanapia had one son, and shortly after his birth she left her first husband at the urging of her mother. She married again within a year and remained married to her second husband until his death in the early 1930s. She had a son and a daughter by her second husband. Following the death of her second husband, Sanapia's life took on a tone which is recalled most vividly by those who wish to discredit her. During this time her violent bursts of temper, excessive drinking, sexual promiscuity, and zest for gambling won for her a notoriety which has never entirely left her. She talks of those years as "the time I was roughing it out."

Sanapia's second husband was apparently her favorite. He is also the only one of her spouses which she refers to as "husband." She was emotionally very ravaged by his death. It is interesting that the more tradition-oriented informants will mention Sanapia's misbehavior after his death but add no note of blame, simply emphasizing her grief. Kardiner (1945:77) makes the following statement, when discussing a Comanche woman's behavior after the death of her child. Perhaps the reaction to the death of a loved husband could correspond to the same pattern.

> After the death of a child a young woman who had previously been entirely respectable would become exceedingly active sexually and would have a whole series of affairs. This behavior, which sometimes lasted two or three years, was recognized as a sort of psychotic state and did not result in the same sort of difficulties that accompanied elopement or break-up of a marriage. The husband would feel sorry and would wait until she recovered and then resume the regular marriage relationship.

115 159 756 It was during the years when Sanapia was "roughing it out" that she first attempted to employ her doctoring skills. She was approached by a sister who wished Sanapia to doctor her sick child.

> She came to visit me one day when I was around here. She rolled a smoke with that Bull Durham and handed it to me, and I took it. I didn't even think what she was here for, but then I knew. She ask me to doctor her sick baby. I got so nervous I just start to shake all over and I told her to go away because I was feeling shame, I guess. Then I start to think what my mother told me, how I couldn't refuse nobody, so I went with her. I kept thinking that I couldn't do no good, but you know, I got that baby well. I thought that was some kind of sign, so I thought that I might try to make something out of this doctoring.

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
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which has been presented and the material still to be presented that Sanapia is very aware of the psychological factor in illness and the necessity of treating psychological as well as physiological symptoms in a patient.

Treatment of Ghost Sickness

Immediately after this first interview, Sanapia instructs the patient to bathe in the stream which flows west of her house and to change his clothes. The actual treatment will begin after sunrise on the day following the first interview. Between this time and the time of the initiation of treatment, the patient is treated as a guest of Sanapia's household. During this time Sanapia sharpens her first diagnosis by a more thorough examination of the patient. Continual bathing is the only activity which is required of the patient. Since Sanapia will have to apply her mouth to the patient in her doctoring, she instructs him to wash often so he will be as clean as possible when Sanapia begins treatment. The notion of the magical effect of water is also probably present, though Sanapia never directly alluded to this.

Sanapia will doctor her patient three times daily for a period of two days. The treatment will be given at sunrise, midday, and sunset. By the morning of the third day the patient should be cured. Sanapia then blesses him, and the patient is dismissed. If, by the morning of the third day, the patient is not well, Sanapia continues her doctoring through another series of six treatments. After four days if the patient shows no sign of improvement, Sanapia will concede that she has failed in her attempts to cure her patient and will suggest either that he go to the white doctors in Lawton to obtain any comfort which they can supply or that he resign himself to his impending death. However, Sanapia states that even if she knows that her patient is going to die, she will usually not tell him because, as she says, "I can't stand to look at them when I have to say that to them. It makes me feel just so bad that I can't do it." Sanapia's ability to foretell the death of a patient is not solely based on her developed skills at prognosticating from the individual's physical condition. She states that she hears a voice which tells her that absolutely nothing can be done to save her patient.

> I hear, "He's dead right now, he's dead right now." And I know they going to die. I know that part too. They would get up and sit up and talk and walk. Well, they eat their food and drink water and they feel good. But I know that's the last meal they going to have. That's the last drink they going to have.

Before sunrise on the day that she will begin treatment and before she awakens her patient, Sanapia selects and prepares the medicines she will use. She then ties them in a cloth bundle, for she will take them with her when she, accompanied by her patient, goes to make her prayers with the rising sun. She then awakens her patient, prepares his breakfast, and takes him to a secluded place on a small knoll south of her house. It is still dark when they walk to the selected place of prayer. Sanapia sits facing east with her patient beside her. She

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

father's rider. Comanche-fashion, the boy rode bareback to save the horse the additional weight of a saddle. He rode in his sock feet, as this helped him to grasp the barrel of the horse better. Many races were run from a standing start.

Comanches, who learned about horses from the Mexicans and Spanish, mount a horse from the right. (All horsemen of Europe except the Spanish mount from the left, and we Americans copy them.) This time Albert was using a stock saddle to exercise the larger stallion. The half-wild animal bolted as Albert started to mount. Albert fell, and his right foot caught in the stirrup.

The frantic horse dragged the boy, dangling from the stirrup, through the timber and underbrush of West Cache Creek bottoms for more than two hours before the father could rope it. They sent for the white doctor right away; but when Dr. McLain saw the boy's condition, he felt death was only a matter of hours, and the setting of the bones and cleaning of his wounds would only subject the boy to additional pain.

He left them a supply of morphine tablets to give the injured boy, should he regain consciousness before dying. This was quite in keeping with the practice of medicine at the turn of the century. Doctors passed out morphine tablets as though they were a new cough drop they were advertising. No other medicine, other than quinine, was in as great supply or as cheap. Most families had at least an eight-ounce bottle of laudanum on the pantry shelf. In addition to its value as a medicine for humans, amateur horse-doctors found it useful.

When Jim's wives learned through Earny that the doctor held out no hopes for Albert, they went into the death wail, even before the doctor could leave the camp.

The foregoing is practically all the community ever learned directly about Albert's accident and the events immediately following Dr. McLain's departure. The rest of the story must be told much as a prosecuting attorney presents circumstantial evidence to convict a defendant of a crime when there are no eyewitnesses.

With Dad away I couldn't leave Mother alone with the store, and the day following an arrival of a load of freight was always a busy one. Besides the team to be cared for and the trade to be waited on, there was merchandise to unpack, mark, and put on the shelves. On nearly every load there was a fifty-five-gallon drum of kerosene to be pumped into the store's container.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
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after all, a twelve-year-old Indian boy has only a twelve-year-old Indian boy's head.

My personal feeling is—and I believe anyone who lived around the plains Indians at the turn of the century will agree—that the greatest miracle performed that afternoon was calling the Martny wives back from the hypnotic state of the death wail. This is a deliberate, self-induced mental condition; and when the women have been in it for a sufficient time, they become impervious to pain. They slash their breasts, bodies, and legs; and if the state continues long enough —say into the third day—it is climaxed by their whittling off a finger with their butcher knife. Generally it is the forefinger of the left hand. Women in this thralldom seem to have a high coagulatory content in their blood. Evidence of women's bleeding to death from self-inflicted wounds, when in this hypnotic state, is nil.

Possibly this blood property is a result of the women's heavy meat diet, or it may be a chemical change in the blood brought on by the severe hysterical state under which they are laboring. One thing old plainsmen are agreed on: Indian women are extremely dangerous when in the wail, and even their own menfolks give them a wide berth.

Because this state is deliberate and self-imposed, they resent being called back to normalcy. It is entered into to escape a sorrow—something they cannot face in their normal state. Perhaps their minds become as blank to sorrow as their bodies do to pain. In a way it is the kind of thinking a drinker uses, when he stultifies his senses with liquor to forget his inadequacy. Of this I am sure—I could never myself have the courage to call three wailing Comanche women back to sanity.

I think of three things happening that day that we can properly label phenomena. First is the dragging of this boy by a frantic horse, through the brush and timber of West Cache, for more than two hours, without the horse's ever once kicking or stepping directly on Albert's head or rib cage. The Bone-setter must have diagnosed these facts, and Dr. McLain must have overlooked them.

Phenomenon number two is a strange cowboy's riding through the country, chancing upon this isolated camp, and seeking food at that exact time. Number three is, of course, that this particular stray cowboy had the courage and willingness to take on a job shunned by a trained, educated doctor, and the skill to turn out a workmanlike job.